Strengthening virus research programme

1638. SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA:
SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA:

Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Planning Commission has suggested to set up a national level mechanism to provide direction for search in various ailments particularly of concern within the country;

(b) if so, whether Government are planning to strengthen the virus research programme for diseases like hepatitis C and E, Japanese encephalitis, dengue, avian flu, and enteric viruses;

(c) whether Government have asked the recognized institutions in the country to submit the proposals; and

(d) if so, by when a final decision is likely to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) and (b) No, Sir. The Planning Commission has not suggested setting up of a national level mechanism to provide direction for research in various ailments, particularly, of concern within the country. However, during the Eleventh Plan period, the Department of Biotechnology has proposed to strengthen virus research in the country with emphasis on viral diseases like Hepatitis 'C' and 'E', Avian Influenza, Japanese Encephalitis, Dengue and other emerging viruses like Chikungunya. The goal of this programme is to establish Virus Research Centres and R & D Networks in order to develop broad comprehensive biomedical research programmes for viral diseases in India.

(c) and (d) The Department has invited proposals through advertisements in the national dailies. The proposals are evaluated and selected programmes shall be implemented during the Eleventh Plan period.

Quality of scientific research institutions

1639. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India ranked at the 17th position for the quality of scientific research institutions and universities in the world;

(b) if so, the efforts Government are making to take our institutions and universities within the top ten positions;

(c) whether the Science and Technology Policy, which was released in 2003, has helped to improve India's status; and

(d) the incentives or encouragement Government are providing to young scientists to generate interest in them, to conduct more and more research and submit more and more papers?